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**Taking charge of one's feelings: Sense of power and affect regulation**

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### Abstract

People who are good at regulating their feelings benefit from more desirable affective lives. Here we examine whether individual differences in chronic feelings of power are associated with regulatory efforts aimed at maintaining positive affect and ceasing negative affect. In Study 1, we found that people with a stronger (vs. weaker) sense of power were more inclined to cognitively re-frame (reappraise) and up-regulate (repair) their affective experiences, whilst also being less inclined to suppress their feelings. Drawing on affective experiences sampled repeatedly over a one-week period, in Study 2 we found that people with a stronger (vs. weaker) sense of power were more likely to cease their negative affect. However, a stronger (vs. weaker) sense of power was not associated with the likelihood to maintain positive affect. Together, the findings highlight a novel domain in which power may enhance self-regulation, and help explain how power differentials shape people's affective and social lives.

*Keywords:* power, affect, mood, affect regulation, emotion regulation

### Taking charge of one's feelings: Sense of power and affect regulation

Although power is widely assumed to promote positive affect and reduce negative affect (see Leach & Weick, 2018, for a review), previous work has largely neglected the possibility that power could be linked to affect regulation—a specific form of self-regulation that can have particularly positive social and affective consequences (Gross, 2015; Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2002; Lopes, Salovey, Côté, & Beers, 2005; Lopes, Salovey, & Straus, 2003; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995). Here we seek to rectify this oversight by examining whether individual differences in chronic feelings of power are associated with self-reported affect regulation (Study 1) and fluctuations in every-day experiences that are consistent with regulatory efforts aimed at maintaining positive affect and avoiding negative affect (Study 2).

Self-regulation describes an adjustment process to align one's thoughts, feelings, or actions with a desired end-state (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998). Affect regulation is a facet of self-regulation that is concerned with adjusting or altering the trajectory of one's feelings (Gross, 1998, 2015; Larsen, 2000; Tamir, 2011)<sup>1</sup>, both in relation to diffuse mood states and more discrete emotions (subsumed under the term 'feelings' here). People can attempt to regulate their feelings in several ways; for example, by proactively changing how they engage with their external environments (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Sanchez, Vazquez, Gomez, & Joormann, 2014) and by suppressing outward signs of emotions (Gross & Levenson, 1993; 1997). One particularly effective and common way of regulating one's feelings is by exerting cognitive control and 'reappraising' one's situation (Gross, 1998, 2002, 2015; Gross & John, 2003). This may entail, for example, distancing oneself from a recent tragedy by framing the event as not directly involving the self (Kross &

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<sup>1</sup> We primarily focus on affect regulation as an intraindividual process aimed at maintaining positive affect and avoiding negative affect. We acknowledge, however, that the term affect regulation can also capture processes associated with other goals, including: evoking negative affect, reducing outward signs of expressions and modulating the behaviour of others (Gross, 2007).

Ayduk, 2011; Wilson & Gilbert, 2008). This and similar mental strategies can be employed to repair or ‘up-regulate’ one’s feelings so as to attain positive affective states and to avoid or cease negative affective states (Gross, Richards, & John, 2006; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Salovey et al., 1995; Quoidbach, Berry, Hansenne, & Mikolajczak, 2010).

Although people are typically motivated to maintain positive experiences and avoid negative experiences (Tamir, 2016), pursuing these goals can be difficult and effortful. At the same time, those who succeed at regulating their feelings enjoy a number of benefits. Indeed, people who report to be more effective at regulating their feelings also report more positive affect (Sánchez-Álvarez, Extremera, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2016; Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley, & Hollander, 2002), whilst those who may struggle, for example because of clinical disorders, report lengthier stints of negative affect (Berking & Wupperman, 2012; Gross & Muñoz, 1995). In a similar vein, people who report being more able to effectively control how they think are better able to cope with negative feelings (Petrides & Furnham, 2003; Salovey, Stroud, Woolery, & Epel, 2002; Schutte et al., 2002). Thus, people who reliably regulate their feelings are more likely to enjoy fulfilling affective lives, compared to those who cannot.

The psychological sense of power—the perception of one’s ability to influence another person or other people (Anderson, John, & Keltner, 2012; see also Fiske & Dépret, 1996)—manifests in many of the same benefits as successful affect regulation does. For example, power is associated with elevated baseline mood (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Bombari, Schmid Mast, & Bachmann, 2017; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003), and an increased propensity to experience happiness in pleasant contexts (Leach & Weick, 2018). Of particular note, power also modulates many of the processes that contribute to successful affect regulation. For example, power enhances goal-striving (Guinote, 2007b; Slabu & Guinote, 2010) suggesting power may also lend itself to the maintenance of positive affect

and cessation of negative affect. Other lines of research indicate that power amplifies the importance of the self (Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001; Guinote, Weick, & Cai, 2012; Overbeck & Droutman, 2013; Rucker & Galinsky, 2016), and fosters an increased reliance on, and awareness of, internal states (Moeini-Jazani, Knoeferle, de Molière, Gatti, & Warlop, 2017; Weick & Guinote, 2008); all tendencies that enhance affect regulation (Füstös, Gramann, Herbert, & Pollatos, 2013). On the other hand, lacking power decouples people from their bodily feelings (Guinote, 2010), which is a hallmark of those who often struggle to regulate their affective experiences (as observed in a number of clinical disorders; Müller et al., 2015; Pollatos et al., 2016).

Power is also associated with improved performance in a number of tasks that require attentional control (Guinote, 2007a; Schmid, Schmid Mast, & Mast, 2015; Smith, Jostmann, Galinsky, & Van Dijk, 2008; see also DeWall, Baumeister, Mead, & Vohs, 2011), suggesting that power facilitates the effective deployment of mental resources. However, other work shows that power disinhibits, which could imply that power holders enjoy less control over their thoughts and decisions (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Guinote, 2007c; Lammers et al., 2011). As this may, in turn, be detrimental to successful affect regulation (Gross, 2015; Peña-Sarrionandia, Mikolajczak, & Gross, 2015; Webb, Miles, & Sheeran, 2012), this casts some doubt on the assumption that power may be associated with affect regulation.

Currently, there is little research that directly tests the relationship between power and affect regulation. Some previous studies have found an association between power and self-reported suppression (Catterson, Eldesouky, & John, 2017; Petkanopoulou, Willis & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2012). However, suppression focuses on regulating outward signs of emotion and is largely ineffective at regulating internal feelings (e.g., Gross & Levenson, 1993). To the authors knowledge, no research has directly examined how power relates to strategies that are focused towards regulating internal feelings (i.e., reframing, up-regulation),

nor how power predicts *actual* fluctuations in daily affect that are indicative of successful affective regulation. This is striking considering the far-reaching consequences of more and less successful affect regulation (Eisenberg, Fabes, Guthrie, & Reiser, 2000; English, John, Srivastava & Gross, 2012; Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2002; Lopes et al., 2005, 2003). Furthermore, studying affect regulation adds a new dimension to previous work that has for the most part examined self-regulation in the cognitive and behavioural realm. To rectify this state of affairs, we conducted two studies examining self-reported affect regulation strategies (Study 1), and temporal fluctuations in affect in everyday life that are indicative of a tendency to maintain positive affect and avoid negative affect (Study 2). In Study 1, we examine three related affect regulation strategies: (i) reappraisal (reframing); (ii) mood repair (up-regulation); and (iii) suppression which as noted earlier is a less effective way of regulating internal states (Gross, 2015; Gross & John, 2003; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Salovey et al., 1995). In Study 2, we focus on actual variations in people's experiences to see whether power is associated with a tendency to maintain positive affect and to avoid negative affect over time.

Across studies, we examine individual differences in people's chronic sense of power as a predictor of affect regulation. 'Sense of power' is an established term that describes people's enduring mental representations of how powerful or powerless people think they are in their relations with others (Anderson et al., 2012). We pursue this strategy because it enables us to study individual differences in habitual affect regulation (Study 1) and temporal fluctuations in affect over longer periods of time (Study 2).

## **Study 1**

### **Participants and Design**

One-hundred and ninety-two students from multiple UK universities participated in exchange for course credit or a prize draw. Six participants were excluded due to incomplete

data,<sup>2</sup> leaving a remaining sample of 186 (50 female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 22.12$ ,  $SD = 7.05$ ). The size of this convenience sample was determined *a priori* (aiming for  $n = 200$ ) and provided ~80% power ( $\alpha = .05$ ) to detect a small-to-medium sized effect of power ( $\rho = .20$ )—a typical effect size observed in the social psychological literature (Richard, Bond, & Stokes-Zoota, 2003).

### Procedure and Materials

Participants completed the task online, which was described as being concerned with relationships and emotions. The Sense of Power Scale (Anderson et al., 2012) provided a measure of perceived power in everyday life (eight items; e.g., "*I can get people to listen to what I say*"), whilst the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003) and Meta Mood Scale (Salovey et al., 1995) provided measures of habitual affect regulation strategies and goals, including: Reappraisal (six items; e.g., "*I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation I am in*"), Mood Repair (six items; e.g., "*I try to think good thoughts no matter how badly I feel*") and Suppression (four items; e.g., "*I keep my emotions to myself*"). We maintained the original scales, which also included measures of Attention to Feelings (thirteen items; e.g., "*I pay a lot of attention to how I feel*") and Clarity of Feelings (eleven items; e.g., "*I am rarely confused about how I feel*"). Responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) for the Sense of Power and Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, and from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) for the Meta Mood Scale.

## Results

### Main analysis

Mean scores and reliability statistics were calculated for all measures. Pearson correlations were then computed to assess the relationship between all measures (Table 1). Below, we report unadjusted *p*-values alongside adjusted *p*-values that are corrected using a conservative Bonferroni method given the exploratory nature of our investigation ( $k = 5$ ;

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<sup>2</sup> Results are unchanged when participants with missing data are included.



Bland & Altman, 1995). As can be seen in Table 1, chronic sense of power was associated with greater use of affect regulation strategies associated with maintaining positive affect and ceasing negative affect. In particular, chronic sense of power correlated with both mood repair,  $r = .31$ , CI [.18, .44],  $t(184) = 4.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $p_{adj} < .001$ , and reappraisal,  $r = .23$ , CI [.09, .36],  $t(184) = 3.16$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $p_{adj} = .009$ . Replicating previous findings, chronic sense of power was associated with less emotion suppression—as noted earlier, a strategy that is typically less effective at regulating internal experiences,  $r = -.26$ , CI [-.38, -.12],  $t(184) = -3.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $p_{adj} = .002$ .

Table 1.

*Internal consistency, means, standard deviations (SDs), and zero-order correlations for all measures.*

Measure	1	2	3	4	(5)	(6)
1. Sense of Power	(.86)	.31***	.23**	-.26***	.19*	.26***
2. Mood Repair (MM)	--	(.59)	.59***	-.12	.18*	.15*
3. Reappraisal (ER)	--	--	(.84)	-.08	.14	.17*
4. Suppression (ER)	--	--	--	(.71)	-.50***	-.11
(5.) Attention to Feelings (MM)	--	--	--	--	(.85)	.00
(6.) Clarity of Feelings (MM)	--	--	--	--	--	(.57)
Mean	4.66	3.24	4.70	3.68	3.79	4.06
SD	0.96	0.64	1.08	1.18	0.60	0.46

*NB.*  $n = 186$ . \* $p < .050$ , \*\* $p < .010$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . MM = Meta Mood Scale. ER = Emotion Regulation Measure. P-values are unadjusted; see text for p-values adjusted for multiple comparisons.

## Discussion

Study 1 found that individual differences in people's chronic sense of power are associated with a tendency to engage in strategies that aim to improve their affective experiences. That is, the more participants reported experiencing power in their everyday life, the more likely they were to report engaging in attempts to cognitively reframe (reappraisal)

and up-regulate (mood repair) their experiences. Corroborating previous observations, a chronic sense of power was also associated with less emotion suppression (Catterson et al., 2017; Petkanopoulou et al., 2012), which is typically less effective at producing desirable experiences (e.g., Gross & Levenson, 1993). Although Study 1 provides an initial indication that individual differences in people's chronic sense of power may be associated with regulatory strategies that are more effective at modulating affective experiences, it is important to establish whether these self-reported inclinations map onto variations in people's actual affective experiences.

## **Study 2**

In Study 2, we examine temporal fluctuations in people's feelings that are indicative of regulating towards desirable affect states. We test a number of predictions by drawing on a longitudinal experience sampling dataset (collected between 03/2015 and 02/2016). This data has contributed to a recent meta-analysis examining differences in mean levels of affect across power (Leach & Weick, 2018, Study 2). Prior to preregistering our hypotheses and data analysis protocol (01/2018) the authors had no knowledge of the relationship between power and the affect measures reported here (see <https://osf.io/gvfw7>). Following previous research (Carstensen, Mayr, Pasupathi, & Nesselroade, 2000), we operationalise affect regulation as an increased probability to cease negative affective states and maintain positive affective states over time (controlling for mean-level differences in affect). This operationalisation is consistent with commonly-reported regulatory goals (Tamir, 2016) and fluctuations in affect associated with reappraisal and mood repair (Carstensen et al., 2000; Verduyn, Van Mechelen, Kross, Chezzi, & Van Bever, 2012; Verduyn, Van Mechelen, & Tuerlinckx, 2011; but see Koval, Butler, Hollenstein, Lanteigne, & Kuppens, 2015). We expected differences in people's chronic sense of power to be associated with an increased

probability of ceasing negative affective states and maintaining positive affective states over the course of a one-week study period.

### Participants and Design

Two-hundred and thirty-four students from a British university participated in exchange for course credits. Forty-five participants were excluded due to: failing pre-planned attention checks ( $n = 6$ ), equipment error ( $n = 12$ ), software adaptability issues ( $n = 9$ ) or lack of responses ( $n = 18$ ), leaving a final sample of 189 participants (166 female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 20.22$ ,  $SD = 2.20$ ). The size of this convenience sample was dictated by the existing data-set and provided 80% power ( $\alpha = .05$ ) to detect a small-to-medium sized effect of power ( $\rho = .20$ ).

### Procedure and Materials

Participants attended an initial lab session (day 0) during which they completed a battery of individual difference measures, including the Sense of Power scale (Anderson et al., 2012). Following this, participants reported the valence of their experiences for seven days (day 1-7), from 1 (*unhappy, scared, sad*) to 7 (*happy, peaceful, enthusiastic*; Yik, Russell, & Steiger, 2011), via Google's smart-phone application Personal Analytics Companion (PACO; Version 1.1.7.1; Google, 2015). The application was set to signal three times a day at random intervals (no less than 30 minutes apart) between 10:00 am and 8:00 pm, for a total of 21 signals per participant ( $M_{\text{ResponseRate}} = 78\%$ ). Participants then returned to the lab, completed the same Sense of Power Scale again, and were debriefed.

## Results

### Data Preparation

The data preparation was carried out as described in the pre-registered protocol. Mean scores and reliability statistics were calculated for measures of Sense of Power and affective valence ( $\alpha \geq .74$ ). The Time 1 and 2 Sense of Power measures were collapsed ( $r = .72$ ) to provide a more reliable measure (Spearman, 1910). Univariate outliers ( $\pm 2.5SD$ ) were

replaced with the next valid observed value in the distribution (for discussion see Osborne & Overbay, 2013). Responses recorded more than 10 minutes following a notification were excluded prior to the analysis ( $i_{\text{excluded}} = 186$ ). Each valid response ( $i_{\text{total}} = 3064$ ) was classified as indicating positive ( $i_{\text{positive}} = 1713$ ) or negative ( $i_{\text{negative}} = 1351$ ) affect relative to each participants' idiosyncratically defined mean (Carstensen et al., 2000). It is important to note that this approach ensures that the findings presented below are not conflated by overall mean-level differences in positive or negative affect. Following Carstensen et al. (2000), we computed two conditional probabilities from participants' affective states to provide an indication of affect regulation: (a) the probability of moving from a negative state to a positive state—the likelihood that, given a participant was in a negative state at sampling occasion  $i$ , they would be in a positive state at occasion  $i+1$ , and (b) the probability of maintaining a positive state—the likelihood that, given a participant was in a positive state at sampling occasion  $i$ , they would be in a positive state at occasion  $i+1$ . On encountering missing data we used the next sampling occasion. Thus, these probabilities reflect (a) the cessation of negative affect, and (b) the maintenance of positive affect; more formally expressed as follows:

Ceasing negative affective states =  $P_1(\text{positive state} \mid \text{negative state})$

Maintaining positive affective states =  $P_2(\text{positive state} \mid \text{positive state})$

Examining these probabilities suggested that participants had a tendency towards to ceasing negative states ( $M = 0.53$ ,  $SD = 0.21$ ),  $t(188) = 1.99$ ,  $p = .048$ ,  $d = 0.14$ , and maintaining positive states ( $M = 0.58$ ,  $SD = 0.18$ ),  $t(188) = 6.00$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.44$ .

### **Main analysis**

As per our pre-registered protocol, Pearson correlations were computed to assess the relationship between all measures (Table 2). As our analysis was guided by specific predictions, the pre-registered protocol did not stipulate the use of any adjustment to the  $p$ -

values to correct for multiple comparisons (Bender & Lange, 2001). As predicted, the analysis revealed a positive relationship between participants' chronic sense of power and the probability of ceasing negative affective states,  $r = .16$ , CI [.02, .30],  $t(187) = 2.18$ ,  $p = .031$ . However, unexpectedly, we found no association between participants' chronic sense of power and the probability of maintaining positive affective states,  $r = -.08$ , CI [-.22, .11],  $t(187) = -1.04$ ,  $p = .298$  ( $Z = -2.11$ ,  $p = .035$ , for the difference between the two correlation coefficients— $r_s = .16$  and  $-.08$ , respectively<sup>3</sup>). Follow-on analysis confirmed the absence of a covariation between participants' chronic sense of power and the probability of maintaining positive affective states, Bayes Factor (BF) in favour of the null = 3.61 (default  $r = .35$ ; see Liang, Paulo, Molina, Clyde, & Berger, 2008). Thus, relative to participants who felt chronically powerless, participants who felt chronically powerful tended to be more likely to cease their negative affect, but were no more likely to maintain their positive affect throughout the assessment period.

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<sup>3</sup> Since correlations were significantly different, we did not apply a meta-analytic procedure to aggregate the two correlations into an overall effect size.

Table 2.

*Means, standard deviations (SDs), and zero-order correlations for all measures.*

Measure	1	2a	2b
1. Sense of Power	--	.16*	-.08
2a. Ceasing negative state (P <sub>1</sub> )	--	--	-.23**
2b. Maintaining positive state (P <sub>2</sub> )	--	--	--
Mean	4.54	0.53	0.58
SD	0.80	0.21	0.18

*NB.*  $n = 189$ . \* $p < .050$ . \*\* $p < .010$ .

### General Discussion

Across two studies we examined whether individual differences in chronic feelings of power are associated with direct and indirect measures of affect regulation. Drawing on self-reports and focusing on the habitual use of affect regulation strategies, in Study 1 we found that people with a stronger (vs. weaker) sense of power reported being more inclined to cognitively reframe (reappraise) and up-regulate (repair) their affective experiences. We also replicated previous findings that people with a stronger (vs. weaker) sense of power reported being *less* likely to attempt to suppress their feelings (Catterson et al. 2017; Petkanopoulou et al., 2012)—a strategy that is unlikely to be effective at regulating internal experiences.

Armed with these findings, in Study 2 we capitalised on experience sampling data to examine variations in affect over time that are considered indicative of affect regulation (e.g., Carstensen et al., 2000). The results revealed that relative to people with a weaker sense of power, people with a stronger sense of power were more likely to cease negative affect. However, unexpectedly, we also found evidence that sense of power was *not* associated with a tendency to maintain positive affect—an observation we discuss in more detail below.

The present findings take a first step towards a more complete understanding of the relationship between individual differences in power and affect regulation—a facet of self-

regulation concerned with adjusting one's feelings to achieve a desired end state. Previous work has sometimes painted power-holders as impulsive, on occasions drawing parallels between the possession of power and a state of alcohol intoxication (Hirsh, Galinsky, & Zhong, 2011). The present data highlight a domain in which power could lead to greater self-regulation in everyday life. These findings dovetail the many studies showing how power elevates performance in demanding lab-based tasks (e.g., DeWall et al., 2011; Guinote, 2007a, 2007b; Kang, Galinsky, Kray & Shirako, 2015; Smith et al., 2008; but see Weick, Wilkinson, & Guinote, 2011), and suggest that the psychological benefits associated with having power may generalise to the regulation of one's feelings.

As noted above, a chronic sense of power was only associated with the likelihood to cease negative affective states, but not with the likelihood to maintain positive affective states. Although this dissociation was not predicted and as such needs to be treated with caution, it could be explained by the fact that, generally speaking, people are more motivated to avoid negative outcomes than to obtain positive outcomes (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Perhaps it is this extra 'push' that spurred people with a stronger (vs. weaker) sense of power to regulate their feelings. Relatedly, a chronic sense of powerlessness may sap the motivation to improve one's circumstances (Seligman & Maier, 1967). In conjunction with recent findings (Leach & Weick, 2018), the present data cautiously suggest that people who benefit from a stronger sense of power may experience negative affect just like people with a weaker sense of power, but they may more readily bounce back.

Although the present findings provide a first indication that power may be associated with differences in affect regulation, many questions remain unanswered. We largely focused on chronic dispositions (Gross & John, 2003; Salovey et al., 1995) and fluctuations in everyday experiences (Carstensen et al., 2000) associated with attaining positive affect and avoiding negative affect. We chose to focus on positive and negative affective states as

people are typically motivated to attain positive states and avoid negative states. In comparison, it is less clear if people are similarly motivated to attain and avoid other affective (e.g., arousal) and emotional (e.g., anger) states (Tamir, 2016). As such, positive and negative affect provide an effective yard stick by which to gauge the degree to which changes in experiences are consistent with common regulatory goals. That said, this approach may overlook some elements of affect regulation. Firstly, power may foster other types of regulation that were not captured by our measures. For example, power makes it easier for people to alter their immediate situation (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003), perhaps allowing them to more easily tailor their environments to alter their feelings. Broader measures of trait emotional self-control may be better suited to capture affect regulation as an overarching construct, and may therefore reveal more consistent patterns (Brasseur, Grégoire, Bourdu & Mikolajczak, 2013; Mikolajczak, Luminet, Leroy & Roy, 2007; Petrides, 2009). Secondly, different patterns of regulation may arise in different circumstances. For example, anger can be down-regulated to reduce negative affect, but also up-regulated in anticipation of confrontation (Tamir, Mitchell, & Gross, 2008). As power fosters dominance reciprocity (Weick, McCall & Blascovich, 2017), power may in some contexts be associated with a greater tendency to up-regulate (as opposed to down-regulate) anger. Taken together, this suggests that further research is needed to more completely document the ways in which power and affect regulation are related.

In Study 2, we analysed a large experience sampling dataset, allowing us to capture fluctuations in affect as they are experienced in everyday life. In revisiting this dataset, we extracted an indirect measure of affect regulation; the probability of maintaining positive affect and of ceasing negative affect. Although suggestive of differences in affect regulation, it is important to note that Study 2's measurement approach provides a limited snap-shot of participants' experiences. For example, this data set did not include direct measures of affect



regulation (chronic or state) nor measures of participants' objective circumstances. Sampling both affective experiences and self-reported regulation repeatedly in everyday life would have allowed for a more precise analysis of the mediating mechanisms through which power is associated with affective outcomes. It is also important to consider the possibility that our results are due to differences in the types of situations people encounter and their reactivity to them (e.g., Thompson et al., 2012). That said, there is some evidence that variability in negative affect is more tightly linked to differences in regulatory effort compared to differences in exposure and reactivity (Koval et al., 2015). Also, Study 2 followed on from the results of Study 1, which revealed fairly sizable associations between differences in people's chronic sense of power and self-reported affect regulation. All in all, there are sufficient grounds to assume that the results of Study 2, at least in part, reflect a tendency for power to be associated with differences in affect regulation.

The correlational nature of the data raises questions about causality. Other psychological constructs that are closely related to, and overlap with, the psychological sense of power may also be playing an important role. People who believe they have little control over the self are likely to also believe that they have little control over others (Leach, Weick & Lammers, 2017). This could mean that those with impaired perceptions of power also hold impaired self-efficacy beliefs about the controllability of their emotions—a set of beliefs that can undermine effective affect regulation (Ford & Gross, 2019). It is also important to consider that while power may facilitate affect regulation, the reverse can also be true. For example, effectively regulating one's emotions can increase the likelihood of successfully influencing others (Tamir & Ford, 2012), which, in turn, is likely to foster a sense of power (Schaerer, Tost, Huang, Gino & Larrick, 2018). By the same token, poor affect regulation abilities may perpetuate feelings of powerlessness. This may be further exacerbated if feelings of powerlessness are, as we find, associated with a tendency to regulate experiences

in less effective ways (i.e., by suppressing them; Petkanopoulou et al., 2012; see also Butler et al., 2003; English & John, 2013; Gross & John, 2003; Gross & Levenson, 1993; Srivastava, Tamir, McGonigal, John, & Gross, 2009; Tackman & Srivastava, 2016). Thus, differences in affect regulation may causally impact the emergence and maintenance of power differentials. Theoretically, it seems most plausible to assume that the relationship between power and affect regulation is to some extent bi-directional.

In closing, the present research provides initial evidence that power is associated with regulatory efforts that are aimed at ceasing negative affective states. The findings call for further research into a neglected topic that can help explain how power differentials contribute to shape people's affective lives.

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